

GRANTEE MONITORING

Grantee Name	First Choice Pregnancy Services
Location/Address	1223 S Broadway St.
Date and Location of Site Visit	June 21. 2017
Grantee Participants	Linda Reising
MDH Participant(s)	Mary Ottman
Grant Agreement #/PO #	Vendor # 0000878031

PURPOSE:

In accordance with the MDH Policy 238.01 Grantee Monitoring, MDH will conduct at least one monitoring visit per grant period on all state grants of over \$50,000, and at least annual monitoring visits on grants of over \$250,000.

The purpose of the grant monitoring visit is to review and ensure progress against the grants' goals, to address any problems or issues before the end of the grant period and to build rapport between the state agency and the grantees. This visit may cover topics such as statutory compliance; challenges faced by the grantee, modifications made to the grant program, program outcomes, grantee policies and procedures, grantee governance, and training and technical assistance needs.

The findings or information obtained through this monitoring activity will be used:

- To ascertain how MDH program funds are being utilized
- To provide targeted technical assistance needs
- To improve program implementation performance
- To suggest other training needs
- In future funding decisions

OVERVIEW

1. Is the Grantee's non-profit 501(c) 3 status current? [Yes](#)

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2. Does the Grantee have a central file containing the official records for this grant agreement and/or amendment? **Yes**
3. Where is this central file located? Executive **Director's office**
4. Who is responsible for this central file? **Executive Director**
5. Does the central file include
 - The grant proposal? **Yes**
 - The award letter? **Yes**
 - The signed grant agreement and any/all amendments? **Yes**
 - Any/all requests and/or approvals for scope/budget changes? **Yes**
 - The work plan? **Yes**
 - Any/all payment requests (invoices)? **Yes**
 - Any/all signed subcontracts? **Not applicable (no subcontracts)**
 - Any/all Progress Reports? **Yes**

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. Does the organization meet all reporting requirements as outlined in the grant agreement and/or amendment? **Yes**
2. Are expenditure reports submitted timely and accurately? **Yes**
3. Are progress reports submitted with all required information and in a timely manner? **Yes**

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CONTRACTUAL

1. Does the Grantee have written policies or procedures addressing use of contractors and/or subcontractors? [Not Applicable](#)
2. Were any sub-contractors paid from the MDH grant required to sign a contractual agreement outlining services to be rendered, duration of engagement, and pay rate? [Not Applicable](#)
3. Was the contractual agreement(s) reviewed and approved by MDH before implementation? [Not Applicable](#)

PERSONNEL POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES OF THE GRANTEE

1. Are time distribution records (e.g., time-sheets) maintained to show how employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind to, the MDH grant and who work on multiple projects/programs spend their time? [Yes](#)
2. Do personnel and/or payroll records show dates of hire/termination, immigration status if applicable, actual hours of time worked, leave time, federal and state programs worked on, and earning for all employees who are funded through, or contributed in kind, to the MDH grant? [Yes](#)
3. Does the Grantee have policies and procedures in writing regarding:
 - Payroll? [Yes](#)
 - Travel? [Yes](#)
 - Overtime? [Yes](#)
 - Timesheets? [Yes](#)
 - Taxes? [Yes](#)
 - Purchasing? [Yes](#)

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- Compensated time off? [No](#)

4. Are employees time sheets approved? [Yes](#)

By whom (what position)? [Executive Director](#)

By the Executive Director? [Yes](#)

5. Does the Grantee's payroll preparation and distribution involve more than one employee? [Yes](#)

6. Does an authorized official approve all checks before being signed? [Yes](#)

Additional Comments:

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PROGRAMMATIC QUESTIONS

Please use this space to answer all questions.

Program History

- When was your program started? Why was it started? FCPS was started in 2010 to reduce the number of abortions in our area of Minnesota. The PA Grant program was started in 2013 to expand services to include an on-going educational component.
- What need does your program fulfill? FCPS provides support, prenatal and parenting education, and resources to pregnant women and parenting women with infants
- How has the program grown or changed since its beginning? FCPS is seeing more clients because of offering the grant funded EWYL program, and ultrasound scanning, and has begun providing a single mom support group.

Grantee's Target population

- Who does the organization primarily serve? FCPS primarily serves pregnant and parenting women with infants
- What is the program's demographic and geographic coverage? FCPS serves primarily serves white, unmarried women.
- Review recent Demographic reporting.

Leadership and Governance

- Effective Board: How many board members currently serve, who are they? FCPS currently has a Board of Directors comprised of 13 Board members – 6 men and 7 women. Two are non-voting members. They are married and single, parenting and non-parenting. Three members are family physicians and two members are nurses. Two have extensive experience with non-profit BODs
- How often do they meet? How are they informed of organization's progress and challenges? FCPS Board of Directors meet monthly and are kept apprised of what is happening with the organization through the Executive Director's report, the Treasurer's report, and various committee reports.
- How supportive is the Board of the program? The Board is very supportive of the program.
- How is the program staffed? Who is responsible for the supervision of grant staff? The program is staffed by grant funded employees who are supervised by the executive director.

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- How are staff evaluated on their performance? How long have PA staff been employed there? [Staff are evaluated by observation and performance reviews completed at 6 months and then annually at date of hire. Currently there is one PA staff who has been employed for 15 months 1 for 9 months, and one for 11 months](#)
- How are staff background checks done? [Background checks are run by the Diocese of New Ulm.](#)
- What is your organization's policy on complaints for staff and clients? [Complaints can be made in writing or in person directly to the executive director who will then follow-up by investigating the complaint and taking disciplinary action if needed. A signed notation will be added to the employees file.](#)

Budget

- Does the current budget reflect your work plan activities? [Yes](#)
- Is the budget accurate for the project size/scope? [Yes](#)
- Do you have any challenges with the budget or invoicing? [No](#)
- Has your Financial Reconciliation taken place? [No](#)
- If you have an elevated risk designation, and/ or your Financial Reconciliation report cited any concerns, these will be discussed.

Review Work Plan including:

Partners

- If applicable: how are people referred to the program? Are there any barriers encountered with referral sources? What is your most common referral source? [Referrals come primarily from family and friends, but we also have clients referred from Public Health, Family Services, area churches, and family physicians. We've not encountered any barriers with referral sources.](#)
- Challenges with partners or specific counties? [Our biggest challenge our policy of not providing contraceptives. County service providers have stated their hesitancy to refer to us because of our policy.](#)

Work Plan

- Review your 2016 – 19 grant application's description of the program you are asking to be funded. On your work plan note the services and activities you said you would provide and the number of clients you would serve.

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- **Prepare a short summary of your current program(s) and the number of clients being served.** How does what you describe in the application compare with what you are currently providing? Have any programs and/or activities or services been added or removed? Have the number of clients being served per quarter decreased or increased since June 2016? Is there anything in particular you want to share about your current program to explain its current status?

The Positive Alternative Grant monies have been used for our Earn While You Learn educational program, Mom's Support Group, and Ultrasound program. They have allowed FCPS to purchase baby equipment and supplies, and pay a part-time advocate to co-ordinate the program; hire a support group leader to coordinate and lead group gatherings focused on learning life skills and networking with other moms; and pay a nurse to do our ultrasounds. The original goal was to serve 35 women through the Earn While You Learn Program and during the first three quarters of the 2016-2017 grant cycle 47 women have received services. The goal for the life skills support group was 15 women and so far 19 women have been served. The goal of the ultrasound program was to serve 28 women and so far 29 ultrasounds have been performed.

We feel the program has been successful and is well received in the community with referrals coming from Social Services, Public Health, local physicians, and area schools and churches.

- Do you anticipate making any changes to the 2017-18 Work Plan? If so, in what way and for what reasons?

Participants:

- What type of outreach does the organization put into action? What is working well? What are more the challenging aspects to finding or retaining clients? Being more intentional about outreach is a goal for 2017 -2018. Facility renovations are complete and staff are in place and trained, the focus can shift to more outreach. At this point outreach has been limited to speaking in schools when invited, Facebook page and website, and networking with community agencies. Challenges to retaining clients include transportation difficulties, and clients just not keeping appointments.

Data:

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- How is program data collected and by whom? Is data collected useful to agency?
- Anything we can do to help or simplify data collection? Program data is collected by all staff with client contact and then compiled by the executive director. Data has been useful for feedback to donors and BOD.

Review Evaluation

- Your 2015-16 Evaluation Report Summary will be discussed (If you were a past grantee).
- Your 2016-17 Evaluation Plan will be reviewed. Any suggestions provided in your 2015-16 Report Summary should be included in the plan, if you are continuing a similar evaluation. If you are planning a new evaluation, details will be discussed. Do you have any questions on your evaluation?

Miscellaneous

- Anything else you would like to share?
- Anything else we haven't asked?

What can we do to help?

- Trainings and Grantee meetings useful for grantee? Any topic suggestions?
- Feedback or suggestions for the state?
- Is there any way MDH can assist you to better equip your success in the Positive Alternatives Grant Program?

Summary:

Grant Manager will summarize further steps or decisions that were discussed at the site visit.

First Choice of New Ulm has been a Positive Alternative (PA) grantee since 2013. Their organization was initiated in 2010 to provide support, prenatal and parenting education and resources to pregnant women and parenting women with infants. In the seven years since it opened First Choice has made great strides in providing care and supportive programming for women in unplanned pregnancies. They have also remodeled and doubled their space for providing their effective programming in their highly visible welcoming center.

Programming provided by First Choice with their PA funding includes: car seat education and distribution, crib distribution and safe sleep education, life skills education, material support, mentoring, parenting education, pregnancy education and ultrasound services. With PA funding First Choice currently offers a Careful Parenting Pack for new clients that includes SUIDS and Safe Sleep, Car Seat Safety, Shaken Baby and Child Abuse Information. Currently the organization has

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no plans to change their current Work Plan, however, they have received additional funding for the 2017 RFP application they submitted. With this additional funding they will be initiating and hiring a Hispanic translator for their educational programming to provide better service for their large Hispanic clientele.

The current Executive Director who has been with the organization since its beginning will be stepping down from her position to move out of state with her husband for his new employment in August. A new director will be hired soon and the current director has hopes of training in her replacement for approximately one month before her departure. This should greatly aid in the transition of staff and all PA funded programming.

First Choice has encountered a barrier and challenge with a county service provider as a source of referrals because of their current policy of not providing contraceptives. Recently First Choice has sent staff to a training for natural and healthy family planning entitled – “FEMM.” This is a pro women and pro health type of education to help inform women on how their bodies work and to work in cooperation with their own natural fertility. The staff is hoping by offering this type of education that local county services providers may be encouraged and more open to partnering with them.

Designing and initiating evaluation project ideas continue to be a challenge for many PA grantees including First Choice. First Choice staff asked if they could receive a copy of current 2016-17 evaluation project ideas to help think through this PA requirement. The grant manager will compile recent evaluation project ideas and send them out to all current grantees soon.

Two ideas were given for future grantee trainings – first, to discuss and look at our own biases on adoption. Do we really believe it is a viable option? Do we know how to talk about adoption as an option? Second, it was suggested we discuss our real and unrealized racial biases.

First Choice has been a responsible grantee and determined to make good and efficient use of their Positive Alternatives funding. Their programs continue to grow as does the community awareness of their programming. The organization has been responsive to all programming reporting submissions in a timely manner. I continue to look forward to working with First Choice under their new leadership and feel confident that their excellent foundation will continue.

Date: June 26, 2017

Grant Manager: Mary Ottman